

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

04-SM-1 Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	32.0 – 32.2 P.M./P.M.	04-1J5900 E.A/Project No.	N/A Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: (Briefly describe project including need, purpose, location, limits, right-of-way requirements, and activities involved in this box. Use Continuation Sheet, if necessary.)

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the County of San Mateo (County) propose the State Route 1 (Route 1) Surfer's Beach Shoreline Protection Project (Project) to install Rock Slope Protection (RSP) along an approximately 175-linear-foot section of eroding ocean bluff adjacent to Route 1 at Surfer's Beach in the City of Half Moon Bay in San Mateo County, California. The Project includes paving a 400-foot section of an informal pedestrian trail through Caltrans right-of-way. This trail is not a designated pathway but would connect to the existing California Coastal Trail (CCT) north and south of the Project site as well as a staircase to provide permanent public access to the beach. These connections will not impact the CCT. The Project area encompasses approximately 3.6 acres, the majority of the Project area is adjacent to Route 1 within Caltrans right-of-way (R/W); and a small portion to the south is owned by the City of Half Moon Bay.

The Project's objective is to reduce erosion and prevent the collapse of the Route 1 highway embankment while also enhancing coastal access and recreation. This Project would provide an interim solution to reduce erosion while a long-term solution to protect Route 1 from future instabilities at Surfer's Beach is identified. A detailed project description and summary of environmental impacts follows on the continuation sheets.

CEQA COMPLIANCE (for State Projects only)

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the following statements are true and exceptions do not apply (See 14 CCR 15300 et seq.):

- If this project falls within exempt class 3, 4, 5, 6 or 11, it does not impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law.
- There will not be a significant cumulative effect by this project and successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time.
- There is not a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- This project does not damage a scenic resource within an officially designated state scenic highway.
- This project is not located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Govt. Code § 65962.5 ("Cortese List").
- This project does not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

CALTRANS CEQA DETERMINATION (Check one)

☐ **Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.) (Adoption of Coastal Plans and Programs [15265c]).

Based on an examination of this proposal, supporting information, and the above statements, the project is:

☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class 1.** (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

☐ **Categorically Exempt. General Rule exemption.** [This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (CCR 15061[b][3).]

Yolanda Rivas

Print Name: Environmental Branch Chief

Yolanda Rivas

Signature

4/8/15

Date

Ron Moriguchi

Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer

[Signature]

Signature

4/8/15

Date

NEPA COMPLIANCE

In accordance with 23 CFR 771.117, and based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State has determined that this project:

- does not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the environment as defined by NEPA and is excluded from the requirements to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and
- has considered unusual circumstances pursuant to 23 CFR 771.117(b).

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

04-SM-1 Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	32.0 – 32.2 P.M./P.M.	04-1J5900 E.A/Project No.	N/A Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.
--	---------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---

CALTRANS NEPA DETERMINATION (Check one)

☒ **23 USC 326:** The State has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act. The State has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to Chapter 3 of Title 23, United States Code, Section 326 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated June 07, 2013, executed between the FHWA and the State. The State has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- ☐ 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c) ()
- ☐ 23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d) ()
- ☒ Activity 4 listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and the State

☐ **23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the State has determined that the project is a CE under 23 USC 327.

Yolanda Rivas

Print Name: Environmental Branch Chief

Yolanda Rivas

Signature

4/8/15

Date

Ron Moriguchi

Print Name: Project Manager/DLA Engineer

[Signature]

Signature

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Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion: 4/8/15

Date of ECR or equivalent : 4/8/15

Project Description

The Project would involve partially removing approximately 600 to 700 cubic yards of the existing fill and building a 5-ft-deep key trench so that 2- to 4-ton RSP could be installed to reduce the erosive potential of the beach. The RSP would have a top layer of a mix of 2- to 4-ton RSP approximately 5.25 ft thick. The gradation of the rocks would follow Caltrans' standard specifications. Underneath, a 1.8-ft-layer of Backing No.1 rock and RSP fabric would be installed to prevent fine particles from migrating out from underneath the RSP. This would reduce the erosive potential of the beach which would undermine SR 1 at this location in the near-term. The layers of RSP would partially absorb and deflect the energy of the waves. Construction would be sequenced to build up the CCT path embankment simultaneously with RSP revetment.

This embankment would blend in with the existing RSP along the beach to the north. In order to provide a stable foot for the project, the rock revetment structure would extend along approximately 1,400 square ft of beach just below the upper shoreline embankment. No grading work will be done on Route 1 for this Project.

The project footprint would be defined with high-visibility orange fencing in order to prevent the public from entering the work zone and to keep construction personnel from causing impacts beyond the established project footprint. Vegetation would be cleared and hauled off-site to a disposal facility.

An excavator, rubber-tired backhoe, and front-end loader would be utilized to excavate existing fill material along the shoreline. Dump trucks would be used to haul excavated material that cannot be reused to an approved disposal facility and to deliver RSP to the construction zone. All equipment would be staged at the bluff top in the paved road shoulder. After the fill has been removed, filter fabric would be installed, and then a key trench would be excavated to form a stable base for the RSP revetment. A crane or excavator would be utilized to lower RSP to the beach and position it to form the revetment structure.

Temporary stairs for beach access would be installed to provide access to Surfer's Beach. A bicycle and pedestrian detour to guide the public safely around the construction zone would be provided. Signs would be installed to indicate the access points. After all construction is complete, temporary traffic alignment, temporary beach access stairs, and related signage would be removed. The beach access stairs and CCT path would be constructed. Striping of the paved connection to the CCT path and signage would be established.

No permanent utility relocation would be required as part of the project; however, utility boxes would be raised for Caltrans signals.

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

04-SM-1 Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	32.0 – 32.2 P.M./P.M.	04-1J5900 E.A/Project No.	N/A Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.
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Summary of Technical Studies

Aesthetics/Visual

The portion of Route 1 at the location of the Project site is listed as eligible¹ for "Scenic Highway" designation, but is not formally designated as such.²

The Project area is zoned as Open Space-Active (OS-A) by the City with the intent to establish the area for "the preservation of active recreational opportunities within the city such as the public beaches, parks, playgrounds, outdoor sports and athletic facilities, recreational vehicle parks, and parking lots supporting recreational activities," as described in Chapter 18.12 of the Municipal Code.³

Construction of the Project could result in short-term impacts to visual resources through the blockage of views by construction activities, construction equipment, the staging area, and the disruption of views by temporary signage, exposure of slopes, and removal of vegetation. However, this visual impact would be temporary and views of the Project area would be substantially restored to a similar state, consistent with the visual character of areas used for active recreation, upon Project completion. Approximately 600 to 700 cubic yards of existing fill would be replaced with 2 to 4-ton Rock Slope Protection (RSP), with a top layer of 4-ton RSP approximately 5.25 feet thick to absorb and deflect the energy of the waves, visually blending in with the existing RSP along the beach to the north. No long-term adverse impacts on visual resources are anticipated.

Biological Resources

The following summary of project impacts is based upon the Natural Environment Study-Minimal Impacts with No Effects Determination EA 04-1J9500, Surfer's Beach Shoreline Protection Project, April 2015.

Within the project footprint, the project would permanently impact 0.07 ac of coastal wetlands and temporarily impact 0.03 ac. To protect the CCC wetlands that are outside of the project limits, ESA fencing would be established.

There was no evidence of bat roosting in the willows or other vegetation within the Biological Study Area (BSA). Alameda song sparrow (*M.m. pusillula*) was spotted in the same location during several passes through the willow/coastal scrub vegetation. The willows and other vegetation form a dense thicket that provides suitable habitat for nesting migratory birds. Pre-construction surveys for migratory birds would be conducted, and appropriate buffers would be applied if migratory birds and their nests are discovered within the general project vicinity. Caltrans would follow the 2010 standard specifications for the protection of migratory birds with the exception that a 50-ft buffer would be applied to protect nesting birds rather than the standard 100-ft buffer.

Many of the special-status wildlife species listed in the databases have no potential to occur in the study area because suitable habitat is not present because there is limited potential for terrestrial wildlife to gain access to the project footprint due to very little land on the west side of SR 1 and high volumes of traffic. Therefore, terrestrial species would not be likely to successfully cross.

There are five species with the potential to occur based upon the presence of habitat or known occurrences within the study area, including green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), central California coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and saltmarsh common yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas sinuosa*) (nesting habitat).

The narrow strip of beach within the BSA does not provide suitable haul-out habitat for marine mammals due to frequent disturbance by the public for recreational use. The marine waters adjacent to the project footprint provide foraging habitat for green sturgeon, steelhead, and Coho salmon, but there is no spawning habitat within the BSA.

¹ <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/cahisys.htm>

² <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic/schwy.htm>

³ <http://www.codepublishing.com/ca/halfmoonbay/>

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

04-SM-1	32.0 – 32.2	04-1J5900	N/A
Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	P.M./P.M.	E.A/Project No.	Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.

There are three special-status animal species with occurrences within 2 miles of the project location. These include the California red-legged frog (CRLF), San Francisco garter snake (SFGS), and the saltmarsh common yellowthroat (SMCY). All of the occurrences are for frogs beyond the urban community. None of the creeks are hydrologically connected to the BSA. There is no suitable breeding or dispersal habitat for CRLF in the BSA.

For SFGS, None of their preferred habitat is present in the BSA, and there are no suitable protected basking sites necessary for thermoregulation. Their main prey base consists of CRLF and Pacific chorus frog (*Pseudacris regilla*). There is no suitable habitat present for either of the species within the BSA.

The drainage that outlets through the twin box culvert to the north of the project would not support either of these species due to lack of habitat and exposure to saltwater that enters the culvert during high tides.

SMCYs nest in fresh and saltwater marshes and creeks where thick vegetation is present around the water source. Even though the willow/coastal scrub vegetation is suitably thick, there are no marshes or permanent sources of water present; therefore, this species would not be likely to nest within the project limits.

A portion of the project's newly paved informal pedestrian trail and the beach access stairs would permanently impact 0.07 ac of willow/coastal scrub habitat. A total of 13 willows with a diameter-at-breast height (dbh) of greater than 4 inches would be removed, and a total of 30 willows would be replanted in the slight depression in ice plant removal area. Caltrans also proposes to employ a combination of restoration treatments:

- Revegetation of 0.03 ac of the CCT embankment with native grasses and herbaceous species found in willow/coastal scrub habitats
- Removal of invasive species that are suppressing growth of native species in the willow/coastal scrub habitat from 0.24 ac.
- Removal of iceplant from 0.07 ac (enhancement).
- Replacement planting of 30 willow trees, planting of wild strawberry, and seeding of native vegetation within the iceplant removal area.

Avoidance, minimization and restoration measures are summarized in the project Environmental Commitments Record.

Cultural Resources

A literature review was completed at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), located at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park on Friday September 19, 2014. In addition to the Project location a ¼ mile buffer was researched to determine if previous archaeological surveys had been conducted and to identify any previously recorded archaeological or historic resources (cultural resources).

A review of previous data reveals no recorded archaeological resources or historic architectural resources located within the Project area. In addition, no archaeological resources were identified during the field survey on September 18, 2014. Three (3) studies have been conducted on areas adjacent to the Project area, none of which identified any cultural material. Two (2) resources have been recorded within the ¼-mile buffer (a historic district and the remains of a historic hotel). Because these historic resources are on the east side of Route 1, they do not have the potential to be indirectly physically or visually affected by the Project; the staging area contains no historic built resources and its use is temporary, therefore, its use does not have the potential to indirectly or visually affect any nearby historic properties. In addition, the Project area has been heavily disturbed by previous work to address erosion issues, and is located in an area comprised primarily of fill.

Therefore, because there are no known recorded cultural resources located within the Project area, no cultural resources were identified during the field survey, and because the Project site is comprised mostly of fill material or areas that have been heavily disturbed, the Project is not anticipated to result in any effects on cultural resources. Although the Project involves a minimal amount of ground disturbance on native soil necessary to reconstruct the informal pedestrian trail and protect the shoreline, there is always potential for

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

04-SM-1	32.0 – 32.2	04-1J5900	N/A
Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	P.M./P.M.	E.A/Project No.	Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.

archaeological deposits to be encountered during subsurface construction activities and throughout the Project area. If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.

If human remains are discovered, State Health and Safety Code 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner contacted. Pursuant to CA Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). At this time, the person who discovered the remains will contact the appropriate Caltrans staff, so that they may work with the MLD on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

Avoidance and minimization measures are summarized in the project Environmental Commitments Record.

Traffic/Transportation

Currently, this Project is estimated to be constructed in approximately three (3) months. Weekend construction is not anticipated. The majority of construction would occur during daylight hours, but some nighttime work may be required to permit temporary closures for tasks that could interfere with daytime traffic or create safety hazards. Examples of these tasks include certain utility relocation activities or pavement conforms.

Temporary traffic realignment is anticipated along the Project site. A temporary lane shift would be created along the Project limits to maintain two lanes of traffic. Traffic would be shifted to the northbound lane and northbound shoulder to accommodate the temporary closure of the southbound shoulder and a small portion of the southbound lane. The southbound shoulder and a portion of the southbound lane of Route 1 would be closed in the Project work area to allow for equipment use. Detours would be disclosed to affected parties in advance and occur during non-peak periods. The Project would result in no adverse operational impact on Route 1. Temporary access to Surfer's Beach will be maintained during the Project as temporary stairs will be installed during construction.

The Project includes paving a 400-ft. section of an informal pedestrian trail through Caltrans right-of-way. This trail is not a designated pathway but would connect to the existing California Coastal Trail (CCT) north and south of the Project site as well as a staircase to provide permanent public access to the beach. These connections will not impact the CCT. A staircase would also be constructed to provide permanent access to the beach. Caltrans has determined that 4(f) does not apply because the proposed project would not permanently incorporate park or recreational land to transportation use. A bicycle and pedestrian detour to guide the public safely around the construction zone would be provided; but the points at which Caltrans right-of-way connects to the trail would not change during or after construction. Signs would be installed to indicate the access points. After all construction is complete, temporary traffic alignment, temporary beach access stairs, and related signage would be removed. Permanent stairs for public beach access, striping of pavement connecting to CCT and signage would be completed as part of construction.

Water Quality Analysis

The following summary of project impacts is based upon the Water Quality Assessment Report, Surfer's Beach Shoreline Protection Project, San Mateo County, March 2015.

The Surfer's Beach Shoreline Protection Project area is located within the coastal zone, but is located outside of any critical coastal area as defined by the California Coastal Commission (CCC). In addition, the Project area is located outside of any Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). There are no creek crossings within the project area. Roadway runoff from Route 1 is collected in roadside drainage inlets. The direct Project receiving water body is Half Moon Bay. Half Moon Bay at the Project area is not listed as an impaired water body. No work is proposed within any special flood hazard areas. The project site lies in the tidal area of Half Moon Bay and is therefore exempt from hydromodification requirements.

There would be 4,891 square feet of additional impervious area created by the Project that would result in minimal increases in the low-flow and peak-flow velocity and volume to Half Moon Bay. Drainage patterns

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION/CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

04-SM-1	32.0 – 32.2	04-1J5900	N/A
Dist.-Co.-Rte. (or Local Agency)	P.M./P.M.	E.A/Project No.	Federal-Aid Project No. (Local Project)/Project No.

would not be altered. Existing drainage systems at the edge of shoulders or in the median of Route 1 are not expected to be impacted. The newly paved informal pedestrian trail would be sloped towards the RSP and beach to mimic the existing drainage pattern; therefore, new drainage systems would not be required for the Project. This would also allow for run-off infiltration. While this minimal increase in impervious area would reduce the available area for infiltration of stormwater, groundwater impacts would be minimal.

During construction, potential water quality impacts include sediment-laden discharge from 13,156 square feet of disturbed soil areas and from storage or work areas. Additional impervious area from this project is not expected to increase turbidity in runoff over disturbed soil areas entering storm drainage facilities; however, temporary construction BMPs will be in place to reduce sediment from construction activities into storm drainage facilities or nearby water bodies.

The coastal areas would be protected according to the CCC regulations during project construction. This project will require a Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP).

Avoidance and minimization measures are summarized in the project Environmental Commitments Record.

Permits and Approvals

Caltrans is seeking an amendment to its Coastal Development Permit through the California Coastal Commission. Reference CDP No. 1-98-057-A3.

The Environmental Commitments Record summarizes the avoidance and minimization measures incorporated into the project (see attached).

